

THE BALLAD OF READING
GAOL 425

The Chaplain would not kneel to pray
By his dishonoured grave:
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross
That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
Whom Christ came down to save.

Vet all is well; he has but passed
To Life's appointed bourne:
And alien tears will fall for him
Pity's long-broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn.

I KNOW not whether Laws be right,
Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law
That men have made for Man,
Since first Man took his brother's life,
And the sad world began,
But straws the wheat and saves the
chaff
With a most evil fan.

This too I know—and wise It were
If each could know the same—
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should
see
How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,
And blind the goodly sun:
And they do well to hide their Hell,
For in it things are done
That Son of God nor son of Man
Ever should look upon I